



Comparative environmental health assessments

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Abstract:

Conceptual and methodological issues in calculating and comparing the health impacts from environmental risk factors in ways that are not only compatible across environmental hazards but also can be fairly compared to burdens from nonenvironmental risk factors, such as poor nutrition, unsafe sex, and smoking, are discussed. It is emphasized that a focus on environmental health burden does not always produce priorities that correspond to those related to environmental quality alone. The methods when applied to China's environmental and other risks using the Chinese burden of disease in terms of lost healthy life years as the metric are illustrated. Household environmental risks are still quite important in China, because of rural poverty, but have been exceeded by community environmental risks nationally. Global risks from climate are small at present, but have the potential to rise. Although not a major greenhouse gas emitter on a per capita basis compared to rich countries, China has already passed the threshold of imposing more global risk than it receives. The study ends with the suggestion that environmental risk assessment should use as a baseline estimates that are based on methods developed in international collaborative assessments, such as those in the WHO Comparative Risk Assessment, in order to foster comparability and policy and public confidence in the methods.

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Resource Description

Communication: ☒

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience: ☒

audience to whom the resource is directed

Policymaker

Exposure : ☒

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Unspecified Exposure

Geographic Feature: ☒

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal



resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Asia

Asian Region/Country: China

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern:

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Review

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content